

**The Honorable Paul Gosar**  
**Vice-Chairman**  
**House Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee**  
**Opening Statement**  
**Oversight Hearing on**  
***“The Implications of President Obama’s National Ocean Policy”***  
**May 17, 2016**

Thank you for holding today’s hearing.

We will hear a lot today about our nation’s oceans and the impacts that the President’s National Ocean Policy might have on those who want to enjoy and protect the bounty of our saltwater resources. We have before us witnesses from Rhode Island and Mississippi who will rightly discuss their concerns that the working men and women, recreationalists and others could be negatively impacted by this policy.

Since I represent parts of a land-locked State, one wouldn’t immediately think that Arizona would care about what impacts our nation’s offshore resources. But, we Arizonans like our seafood and our domestic energy.

Just as importantly, Arizona has thousands of miles of reservoir shoreline at Lake Havasu, Lake Mead, Roosevelt Lake and others created or managed by the Bureau of Reclamation, the State and the Salt River Project, to name a few. That shoreline – and the people who depend on the water within those reservoirs – could very well be roped into the federally based National Ocean Policy.

Don’t take my word for it though. Look at the Appendix to the Implementation Plan for the following items:

- restoration of 100,000 acres of wetlands and uplands
- developing measures to evaluate National Forest Best Management Practices and
- studying impacts from land-based sources of pollution.

In addition, we have Mr. Dan Keppen, Executive Director of the Family Farm Alliance – which includes a number of Arizona’s irrigation districts -- testifying that the policy’s regional planning bodies could quote “dramatically increase the role of federal agencies on inland rivers and adjacent land uses...at a time when other hydropower dams are under ongoing litigation by certain environmental groups” unquote. As he will testify, the policy’s ecosystem-based management scheme quote “involves vague and undefined and policies that we know from experience can be used by critics of irrigated agriculture as the basis for lawsuits to stop or delay Federally permitted activities.” Unquote. Of course, the Administration may challenge this, but they didn’t even bother to show up today.

This policy is another chapter in the death-by-a-thousand-cuts strategy this Administration employs against the people and communities who depend on our natural resources on land and under water. Federal zoning on both land and water creates uncertainty, which in turn breeds litigation. It's a clever way to impose a web of federal layers of bureaucracy – a recipe for stagnation.

On its way out the door, the Administration is creating far-reaching tentacles that will only harm existing uses and make it nearly impossible to permit future traditional uses with some remote nexus from the oceans– even in the Grand Canyon State.

I thank for the witnesses for their courage to ask the tough questions and for their transparency, which is sorely lacking from the quote-unquote “most transparent Administration in history”. I look forward to working with you and my colleagues on getting some answers and clarity on this notorious policy.